

NSC BRIEFING

15 February 1955

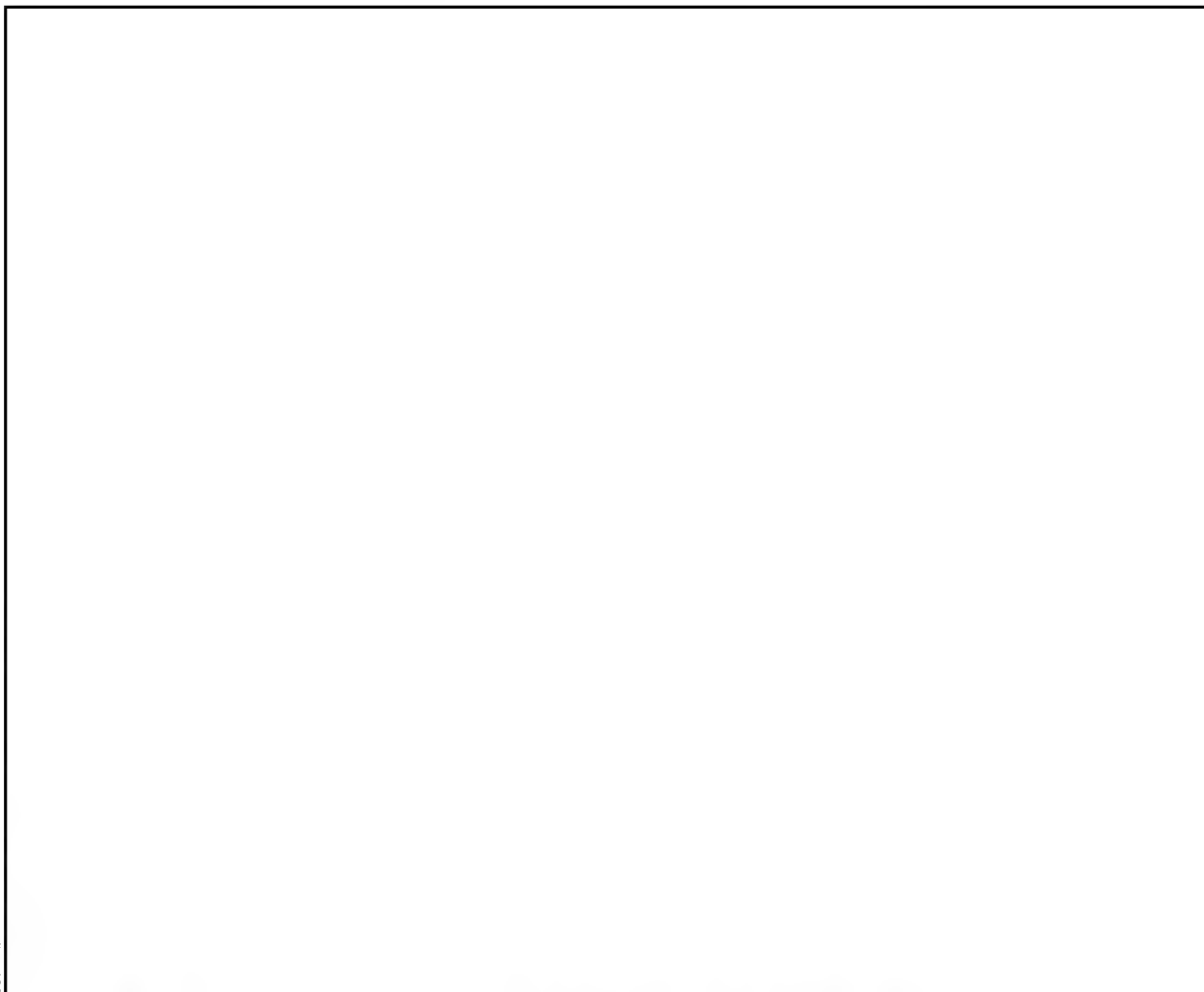
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WORLD REACTIONS TO KREMLIN SHIFTS

- I. First free world impressions on fall of Malenkov have connected renewed Soviet emphasis on heavy industry with the public revelation of Khrushchev's hidden power and with appointment Marshal Zhukov as Minister of Defense. A harder propaganda line on foreign policy is generally anticipated; an actually harder policy itself is viewed as probable. Noticeable tendency for each government to interpret results of these changes in manner favorable to its own policies.

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- II. Elsewhere in free world, reactions range from calmness to alarm and criticism of the West.
- A. Turkey has remained calm, noting the rise of military figures as carrying an obvious significance.
 - B. Iranian press, however, reflects worry of Iranian government over any intensification of cold war, apprehension over status of recently negotiated USSR-Iran border and financial agreements.
 - C. Arab press gave changes front page attention. Consensus: a firmer Soviet policy likely, chances of war increased.
 - D. Press coverage in Israel was more critical of the West. Moderate Tel Aviv paper charged that Malenkov's failure was "to no small extent abetted by the West," arguing that if the West had met Malenkov half-way, extremists would not have been strengthened at expense of moderates.

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E. In India, "see-no-evil" approach maintained.

1. Nehru promptly announced no change in his plans visit Moscow this summer.
2. Nehru described change as "very significant," added:
"Generals all over the world are anxious to avoid war because they know what war would mean."

F. Japanese concern limited to possible effect on forthcoming negotiations to "normalize" relations with USSR.

1. Prime Minister Hatoyama remains optimistic.

G. South Koreans have been uniformly pessimistic, reiterating familiar line that West must attack Communists before Communists destroy free world.

III. Orbit reaction, on official level, has been stonily "correct," although clearly surprised. "Private" comment, where available, is more revealing.

A. USSR's senior partner in Orbit, Peiping, has thusfar made no comment at all, confining reports to factual statements.

1. No reason to believe ChiCom leaders alarmed by developments, since they are not known to have identified own fortunes with those of any particular Soviet leader since Stalin.
2. Khrushchev, Bulganin were ranking members of Soviet delegation to China last October.
3. Possible that Peiping is pleased with changes in Kremlin, as being indicative of more substantial Soviet support for ChiCom military operations

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B. East German popular interest has been great. Street

sales of newspapers in East Berlin exhausted supplies within minutes. First reports indicated East Germans inclined to believe harder line likely.

1. Molotov's attack on US being interpreted as confirming widespread rumors that East Germany will react sharply to ratification Paris Accords.
2. Public expects: proclamation of conscription for GDR National Armed Forces, sealing of borders to prevent exodus youths.

C. Hungarian public reportedly apprehensive, with growing fears that end of "new course" imminent.

1. Rumors persist about the possible unseating of Premier Nagy (closely identified with "new course").
2. Hungarian press mentioned change only briefly, has stressed speeches by Khrushchev, Molotov, and Bulganin.

D. Rumanian press played down Malenkov ouster, stressed Molotov's speech, particularly statement on possible atomic destruction of West.

1. Sober private comments emphasized fear of return to Stalinism.

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2.

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said of Malenkov's dismissal - "It means a return to black bread for Rumanians after six weeks of white bread for first time since the Communists took over."

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3. Cominform Journal (published in Bucharest) reproduced

Bulganin, Khrushchev and Molotov speeches in that order, without editorial comment.

IV. As the "voice of free Communism," Yugoslavian reactions have special interest.

A. Yugoslav acting foreign minister characterized fall of Malenkov as a "negative development."

1. Apparently believes it might stop or slow down "liberal" changes, which the Yugoslavs believe have been taking place in the USSR.

2. However, he gave no clear indication of his long-range expectations concerning Soviet policy.

B. US Embassy Belgrade thinks Yugos will be unlikely to take any initiative which might curtail Soviet friendship gestures.

(TITO, IN MASTERFUL DOUBLE-TALK, MADE FOLLOWING)
C. Comment: "As far as present situation is concerned, a state of affairs which came about recently, I think that extremely pessimistic forecasts cannot be made because of some changes which took place in a country, without bearing in mind at same time in a certain sense that also they who are making these forecasts have contributed to the situation changing and worsening (SIC)!"

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